

Unite to resist the looming danger of fascism

In the few weeks since her installation in power at the centre, Indira Gandhi and her government have taken measures in hot haste whose motive is pointer to the danger looming large over the country. With the slogan of 'a stable centre' she has returned with two-third majority in the Lok Sabha, aided by the bourgeois press, money bag of the monopoly houses and the manipulative arm of a centralised rigging machinery. The strength is enough for undertaking constitutional amendments in case of necessity, to help meet the objective of the ruling bourgeoisie. Now she has brought the PD Act back. She had made it clear even before assuming office that her chief concern was law and order of this exploitative capitalist system; for the people it meant a veiled threat to democratic mass movement.

Her government has underscored its intention of activizing the 'law enforcement agencies' and of maintaining its grip on the broadcasting media. It has resolved to 'revitalize' the '20-point programme', whose intention is not difficult to follow. Her party has engineered massive defections to topple non-Congress (I) ministries in three states and install its own governments there. And latest, her government has dismissed non-Congress (I) ministries in nine other states, dissolved their legislatures and brought them under President's rule.

The pattern of measures reveals a common orientation. There is a distinct trend among them, in as much as they aim patently at arming her government with absolute power, levelling down all opposition on its way in the aggregate interest of the bourgeoisie in the prevailing crisis-ridden condition of the capitalist system, taking advantage of the absence of a powerful united left and democratic movement in the country. Evidently, Mrs. Gandhi is not content with 'stability' at the centre only. She wants also to enlarge the area of 'stability' for operational convenience.

Pointing to her moves, the Central Committee of our party has said: "The way the central government has dismissed the non-Congress (I) ministries in nine states and dissolved their legislative Assemblies and also the way Haryana and Himachal Pradesh governments have been grabbed by the ruling party, the Congress (I), by causing large scale

defections and pressurizing the MLA's, have struck at the very root of democratic norms, practices and rights of the people. We strongly condemn this utterly undemocratic and high handed methods pursued by the central government and the ruling party, the Congress (I)."

A critical examination reveals that while she is trying to centralise power and arm her government with all repressive weapons Indira Gandhi is, at the same time, trying to wear a radical cloak and appear as friend of the poor. The emergency has not been re-clamped, but the operations of emergency are under way. Noticeably, Mrs. Gandhi's trusted lieutenants of the emergency rule are quietly taking their positions one by one.

What do all these indicate? Which direction is Indira Gandhi, being the trusted leader of the capitalist class, trying to lead the country? Rising from the abyss of 1977 election defeat, she is wielding power again.

Only less than three
ASSAM

On 24th February last a team of deputationists led by Comrade Asit Bhattacharya, Secretary, Assam State Committee, SUCI met Mr. Jail Singh, Union Home Minister at Gauhati to place the suggestion of the party and later on attended the all-party meeting convened by him. Comrades Asit Bhattacharya, Jainal Abedin M.L.A., Nazmul Haque, M.L.A., Provat Khatuniar, and Kalyan Chowdhuri were present.

While meeting the Home Minister as well as in the all-party meeting the SUCI representatives strongly condemned any attempt to arbitrarily fix up the 'Base Year' in dealing with the question of 'foreign nationals' and

years ago, people had burst forth in hatred and anger against her fascistic rule and emergency misdeeds. What did pave her way back so soon? Apart from the open handed support of the ruling capitalist class with money bags, publicity and all that, was not the failure of the so-called left parties to build up a genuine united left alternative as an instrument of struggle which alone could defeat the politics of the bourgeoisie which Mrs. Gandhi represents, largely responsible for her comeback? Did not our party appeal to these parties again and again to realize the urgency of the situation and rise to the occasion?

Leaders of the CPI(M), CPI, etc. are condemning her acts of toppling and dismissing non-Congress (I) governments as 'undemocratic and unprincipled'. No doubt these are so. But are these epithets sufficient to expose the real danger? Do the recent measures of the central government only reflect the personal ambition of Indira Gandhi and her chosen men? Or are these measures essential to her role as the trusted and faithful servant of the capitalist class plunged in crisis all around?

Unless the motive behind the measures and policy objectives of Indira Gandhi's Government is correctly read and the design of the capitalist class correctly ascertained, the gravity of the situation cannot be realized. The
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Central Committee on dismissal of State Assemblies

Calcutta, February 18:

The Central Committee of our party SUCI issued the following statement to the Press on the recent dismissal of nine State Governments by the Centre:

"The way the Central Government has dismissed the non-Congress (I) Ministries in nine States and dissolved their Legislative Assemblies and also the way the Haryana and Himachal Pradesh Governments have been grabbed by the ruling party, the Congress (I), by causing large scale defections and pressurising the MLA's, have struck at the very root of democratic norms, practices and the rights of the people. We strongly condemn this utterly undemocratic and high handed methods pursued by the Central Government and the ruling party, the Congress (I).

"It is worthwhile to recall that, contrary to CPI(M) and its allies, it was only our party which similarly protested against the dissolution of State Assemblies by the erstwhile Janata Government at the Centre by raising, the bogey of 'popular verdict' in favour of the Janata, as we considered it a dangerous precedent adopted only to satisfy their petty parliamentary interest.

"For long our party has been warning that the ruling class, in face of the growing crisis of capitalism, is taking recourse to fascism. This has been further proved by this most undemocratic step of the Central Government.

"Taking lessons from mistakes, all the Left and Democratic parties, however belated, should now come forward to unitedly resist this dangerous move of the Central Government, and we call upon the people to join this struggle in order to safeguard the last vestiges of democratic rights of the people."

SUCI deputation to Union Home Minister

the constitutional provisions, relevant Acts and Pacts with different states should be taken into consideration but the central focal point should be to forge unity among the great Indian people. It was pointed out that the questions of all-round development of the state and full flourishing and blooming of Assamese language and culture were possible only in a congenial atmosphere where scientific outlook to build up

unity and amity among the people belonging to different linguistic groups and religions were given topmost priority. The deputationists appealed to all concerned to adopt not a rigid but a flexible stand and unbiased attitude on these pressing problems. They also demanded constitutional recognition of Assamese language in the State of Assam irrespective of percentage of population and pressed
(Contd. to page 8)

National Police Commission's Report vis-a-vis Police Savageries

The third part of the National Police Commission's report came to the press (though scantily) which proved that the observations made by our party long before and reiterated in the memorandum presented to the Commission by UTUC (Lenin Sarani) on 22nd December '78 were cent per cent correct.

The commission has come to the conclusion that police as a system in our country is yet to free itself from its "long imperialistic heritage" and "unhealthy autocratic tradition". Policing, therefore, in this country is the "source of oppression and torture on the innocent", and the "protector of the miscreants." The irony is that this plain speaking on the police system by a national commission was being synchronised with further savageries on the villagers of Narainpur in UP, Parasbigha and Dohiya in Bihar, either directly joined by police forces or instigated and patronised by them. These incidents are a slur on any civilised society and put to shame the social system; yet the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois politicians instead of showing the minimum honesty of dealing firmly with the culprits who are the worst criminals, exploit the situation to their narrow parliamentary objectives. Only a mighty wave of mass movement for the establishment of democratic norms, principles and code of conduct for the police can save the society from the indignities it suffers so frequently at the hands of the so-called 'protector of law', and their patrons—the parliamentary parties representing the interest of the exploiting class.

When the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois politicians running the governments both at the centre and in the states are all piping the same tune of 'law and order' and vying with one another in showering praise for the police forces knowing full well that they form the coercive instrument to defend this exploitative capitalist class and giving them the certificate of servants of the people, it is our party alone that has been consistently demanding a thorough overhauling in the very attitude, approach, motivation and orientation of the police system in our country which is still carrying the legacy of colonial rule.

Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, our revered leader and teacher pointed out long back that in our country, police, the much vaunted 'law keeping agency' had become the single biggest source of danger to any civil code, decency and morality. It has truly become the "most organised band of gangsters" as Justice Mullah once observed. The historic reasons for the persistence

of this barbaric attitude and a criminal mental make up of police personnels, absence of minimum democratic norms and ethics, code of conduct as also administrative neutrality in the whole system, Comrade Ghosh showed, lay in the utterly reactionary character of moribund capitalism in our country coupled with undemocratic and opportunist character of the parliamentary parties defending the system and on top of all this, absence of a strong democratic mass movement to bring about the much-needed change in the system of policing of our country.

Reiterating this fact, UTUC (Lenin Sarani) in its memorandum to the National Police Commission showed that not only the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties that successively came to governmental power both at the centre and in the states have not made any slightest change in the police system but have shielded the guilty officers and personnels committing worst kind of crimina

activities and have thus further corrupted the system in order to use it as a handy instrument against the political opponents.

As a result, arrest without warrant, keeping no record of arrests, detention without trial for long period, application of third degree method against the arrested persons and even killing them within jails have become the usual features in the Indian brand of democracy. During thirty years of Congress rule it had been our experience that in order to gag people's legitimate struggle police always used to arrest the workers of these movements, bring them to custody and then find out and level such charges against them which were non-bailable so that they could be harassed at will. The situation was no different during the Janata regime as also under the rule of a government led by the so called 'Left-Front'. To this has been added, as is being witnessed in West Bengal, the practice of not recording in the police stations any complaint against any person belonging to or even patronised by the ruling parties, not withstanding the nature and gravity of the complaint; be it murder, arson, physical assault, robbery or looting or organised attack on democratic mass movement. Numbers of workers of our party in different districts engaged in organising the poor peasants in their fight against the rural vested interest for achieving their just demands have been falsely implicated with charges of murder, arson, looting etc., and free movement of these workers have been practically made impossible despite the claim of the government that they stand for democratic right of the people. No doubt, democracy in the bourgeois sense also becomes a mockery if organised gangsterism patronised by police and

the ruling parties rules the country.

What is more, since the Congress governments in the country all the successor governments, even the governments run by the so-called Lefts, unbridled power has been centralised in the hands of police and the demand for open enquiry into police brutalities has been turned down by the self-proclaimed 'representatives' of the people on the spacious plea that it would create 'demoralising effect' on the police force! Successive governments have turned down therefore, the most urgent democratic demand of bringing about a well-defined, civilised code for police, ensuring exemplary and deterrent punishment for the criminal behaviours of police personnels and thereby ensuring also fundamental and democratic rights of the people. It is really a tragedy that not to speak of the governments run by the branded bourgeois parties—even in West Bengal, no democratic reform has yet been brought about in the police code and Acts carrying the most hated legacy of the past although it comes under the complete purview of the State—and the Central Government has nothing to interfere with it. While the parties—Congress, Janata Lok Dal, CPI, CPI(M) none came forward to create this basic pre-condition for democratic rights and principles in the society everybody sheds crocodile's tears for the oppressed and condemns police barbarities just to exploit popular sentiments to be of use in parliamentary politics. None of them is the believer in the age old proverb that 'example is better than precept'.

So, Indira Gandhi rushed to Narainpur village in UP and she and her son shed much tears for the outraged but did this come from a genuine feeling or express a determination to put a stop to police vandalism by strong measures? Or was it a pretext for her subsequent undemocratic act of dissolving the Assembly? Well, the people have seen

enough of political gimmicks by these bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties. They want now concrete actions. Will the Central Government arrange for an open enquiry into the carnage of Narainpur so that the guilty police officials and personnels as also the district administrators are meted out exemplary punishment? It is now entirely within the competence and jurisdiction of the Central Government. It can not evade its responsibility by simply 'transferring' or 'suspending' a few officials or holding a so-called domestic or departmental enquiry, the fate of which is not unknown to the people. Nor can the crime be washed out by paying some money as 'compensation' (!) to those whose loss will never be compensated.

By the way, why the Congress (I) leader is reticent about similar dastardly happenings in Parasbigha and Dohiya villages in Bihar? Is it because the hands of the party followers are not clean, as some press reports say? This is the standard of morality of these parties who rule the country. And in this regard, the Pseudo-Marxists are no exception. Concrete examples will prove our contention.

Since the 'Left Front' came to governmental power in West Bengal, it has not taken steps against those police officials who were found guilty of criminal activities against the political workers. Not only this, it is this government that deployed para-military forces against trade union movements in Santaldih power station and elsewhere. It is this government that has refused to hold an open enquiry into the firings on and killings of Calcutta Port workers. If after all this, anybody had any doubt as to the attitude and approach of the government to bourgeois sense of law and order, Mr. Jyoti Basu made it amply clear.

Mr. Basu, while deposing before the Sharma Sarkar Commission, set up to probe into the instances of

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Whichever Party in Government unbridled power has been concentrated at the hands of police

(Contd. from page 2) police 'excesses', was asked by the commission whether police should defy illegal directives from the government, remain inactive during disturbances under instructions or whether he (Mr. Basu) would advise the police to defy instructions that were palpably not only illegitimate but also illegal. Mr. Basu made his views (surely his party's views also, he being a Polit Bureau member) clear by holding that the police personnel or administrative officers could not be left to decide on whether or not to defy illegal orders as this would "put the administration in a difficult situation." So, they should not decide what was legal and what was not. 'Orders', Mr. Basu thundered, "had to be carried out".

(Statesman, 20.2.80)

Fine indeed! Who can challenge Mr. Basu's credential as the 'friend' of the people and a 'champion' of their democratic rights? Perhaps the guilty police officials against whom the probe body was said to have been set up by Mr. Basu's government would not have found a better defence than the one that came through no less a person than Mr. Basu, the Chief Minister of a 'Left Front' Government and if you like a 'Marxist' too! Will anybody find any difference of this approach and attitude of Mr. Basu who calls himself a 'Marxist' from those of Mrs. Gandhi?

But the point is that democratic norms and standard in police system of the country demand that police forces should not be made to obey lawless laws or directives if it is to be freed from political interference of the ruling party and the relative administrative neutrality is to be restored. This has been the demand of the democratic movement in our

country and humanist thinkers like J. P. also voiced this demand. Indira Gandhi was reacting sharply to this demand. Today Mr. Jyoti Basu joins her in giving similar reaction to this just and democratic demand.

But the offshoot of this political interference which is in essence dependence of the ruling party for its stay in government on police help is the licence that it gives to police force to perpetrate criminal activities on the people for personal gains. This fact is even admitted by the National Police Commission. In the words of the Commission: "If he (the police personnel) does a lot of unfair things to please his political bosses why would he not do the same things for himself?"

To the leaders of all the bourgeois parliamentary parties this may be a vexing question but peoples' concrete experience confirm that this is a valid question and the future of democratic norms and rights in this country depends very much on the elimination of both—unfair things of police at the biddings of the ruling party bosses as also for personal gains. But how can this be ensured? How can the people find remedy against the vicious chain of police and anti-socials that now holds the society and people to ransom? Before we come to the question we are to know the reason that is actually working behind the lukewarm attitude of all these parliamentary parties to bring about minimum democratic norms and standard in the police system. We are to know precisely what is the reason that in the face of recurring incidents of police savageries, instead of severely punishing the offenders of law of civilised society, those are being shielded and patted on the back.

The reason lies in the fact that moribund capi-

talism is mortally afraid of oppressed people's class unity, cohesion and their organised movement against the system which is the source of their miseries. To contain this possibility the crisis ridden bourgeoisie is depending heavily on the parties subservient to their cause as also police and other coercive agencies. For this, the bourgeoisie and its chosen parties want not to curb but to give a free hand to activities of police and administration, thus eliminating the last vestiges of democratic norms and principles.

But what is more, even these chosen parties know that, given the bourgeois backing, its money bags, press and media, these alone cannot bring them to governmental power; what is wanted more is the help and co-operation of top bureaucrats of police and administration who do the trick by rigging the actual verdict of the people through fraudulent methods. Is it difficult then to understand why the police and administrative officers and even personnels have least cause of fear from those who depend on them so much for their political existence?

The administrative bureaucracy including that of police has thus assumed so much importance. By the process of administrative centralisation, absolute dependence of the class and its chosen parties on the bureaucracy administrative fascism has struck a deep root in our country.

In the days of competitive Capitalism—the ministry in conjunction with the judiciary enjoying relative independence—and the elected legislative used to defend people's interest in the bourgeois sense by enforcing control and vigilance over the police and administrative bureaucracy. At this stage of moribund capitalism the course has been reversed. Today, the so-called elected representatives are bound

in gratitude to police and administration not only for their 'victory' but also for their unfair and immoral activities, for containing their opponents by employing anti-social elements. Today, it is the bureaucracy including the police that controls the other two wings. The so-called champions of democracy have thus only translated the will of the crisis-ridden bourgeoisie from their positions in government only to pave the way for all-out fascism.

The toiling people will have to grasp this hard reality and prepare themselves accordingly. They can do so only by uniting

themselves on class basis, on the basis of higher proletarian culture and morality and on the strong edifice of clear cut political objective of accomplishing the task of anti-capitalist Socialist Revolution. Preparatory to this ultimate struggle, they are to develop mighty wave of democratic mass movements, rallying behind the revolutionary banner of this Party SUCI. It is on the strength of this legitimate movements and pressure of democratic opinions that they can earn and defend their rights. No other course is left to them.

Present political situation

(Contd. from page 1) democratic people must realize the implications of these developments. Otherwise it will be impossible to fight the real danger rearing its head behind all these.

Indira Gandhi's government is seeking to justify the measures on the plea of 'popular verdict'. This so-called 'popular verdict' is now a convenient stick in the hands of bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties in government to beat opponents. They all interpret it, each in its own way, as can suit their petty parliamentary interest. The Janata Party, too, advancing the same plea of 'popular verdict' in 1977, had dismissed Congress governments in nine states. The CPI(M) leadership had welcomed this measure at that time. It should be recalled that it was only our party which had protested against this undemocratic Janata measure, warning that it created a dangerous precedent which could be used by another reactionary force in future. It has come true. The precedent has boomeranged the Janata and some of its allies and is being cited as a 'legal, constitutional and moral' basis by the present immoral, unscrupulous and hypocrite Congress (I) leaders at the centre. Can the Janata, CPI(M) and their allies deny their responsibility for the present turn of

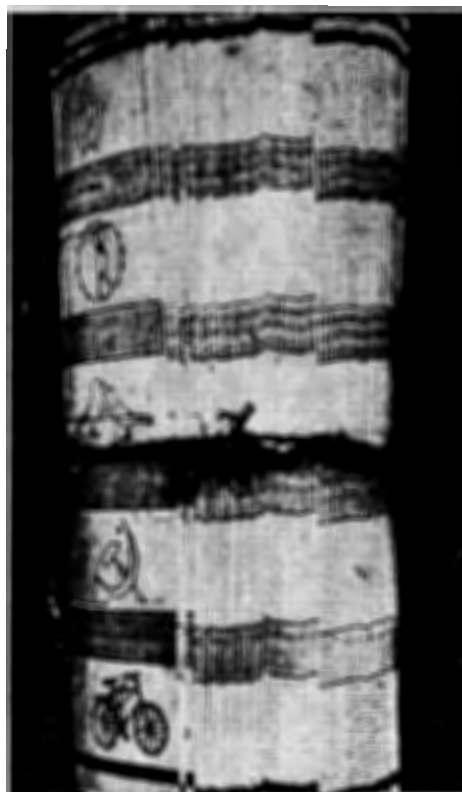
events? Can they deny that Indira Gandhi is taking advantage of the misdeeds they committed from governmental power? Have they realized even today what price the people have to pay for all this?

Our party has repeatedly upheld that the anti-democratic measures of bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties should be examined in the yardstick of democratic norms and principles. These parties always produce reasons of one kind or another to prove the legal and constitutional propriety of their acts. But these are mere technical smoke-screens intended to hide their real motive. Leaders of the Congress (I) are also advancing several pleas to justify their government's measures. But has not this government acted only to gag the democratic voice of the people? The Congress (I) engineered massive defections in three States—Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Karnataka—to topple the non-Congress (I) governments there. But even in the ideal bourgeois democratic standard, defection is a highly immoral act. Indira Gandhi is herself quite used to the nasty politics of defection. She had used it earlier, too, when she was in government, or in the opposition.

The Congress (I) justification for dissolution of
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(On the Left) Half burnt ballots stamped on Cycle Symbol found near a pond in Bankura Constituency. (On the Right) Bunch of ballots stamped on Cycle Symbol found on a street of Mathurapur.



slip. He gave his age as 18 years when the slip he was holding was of a man 49 years old. He was allowed to vote." (Statesman 4.1.80) This is not the picture of the Baghat constituency of Caretaker Prime Minister alone, but of many other constituencies in several states. Following the wide exposure, the Election Commissioner observed the formality of ordering repoll in a few booths.

Besides, there are many instances of forcible removal of ballot boxes from many polling booths. Mr. Shakhder also has admitted that he had received such reports from some Returning Officers.

Officials' conduct

An instance of the partisan way in which polling officials at many booths conducted themselves comes from Maharajgunj constituency in Bihar. The Presiding Officer of a booth at Indrauli village was arrested when he was caught stamping ballot papers and inserting them into a ballot box. This officer was caught, but many others did the same but went scotfree.

West Bengal Scene

Collection of voting figures: Besides similar incidents, some other unusual phenomena have been observed on the polling day. It was seen that the state administration had set up a machinery to collect almost hourly voting figures, contrary to the rules of the election commission. This arrangement was not notified publicly, nor were these hourly voting statistics placed before the public. Undoubtedly, this costly elaborate arrangement had a definite objective. What was that?

Midway halt: There are more strange happenings. At the end of polling the journey of ballot boxes from polling booths had its strange aspects. At many places the ballot boxes were not taken directly to the night stations. A temporary halt was arranged for the boxes. Party agents were not allowed to stay close these

(Contd. on page 5)

How 'Free' and 'Fair' was the Election !

After the ballot boxes had poured out a landslide victory for Indira Gandhi at the recent Lok Sabha elections, fulfilling her bid to recapture power at the centre, and the CPI(M)-led 'Left Front' in three states had demonstrated their 'proficiency' in electioneering, the Chief Election Commissioner Mr. S. L. Shakhder, expressed his full satisfaction "with the manner in which the elections had been conducted". (Statesman, 11.1.80) Mrs. Gandhi, too, although she had been repeatedly pronouncing her apprehensions about poll rigging before the elections, is now poised with full satisfaction. What is more, she claims to have noted down on a piece of paper, much before the polls, that her party would secure 350 seats. The Chief Minister of West Bengal, Mr. Jyoti Basu, had declared: "Nobody will be allowed to enter the people's citadel set up in West Bengal and we must secure all the seats". Hardly anybody has been allowed. For, the ballot boxes registered a tally of 37 seats for the CPI(M) led 'Left Front' out of 41 in West Bengal.

Beneath these claims and successes, however, there are other facts, other realities. Let us probe a little into them. Three phases mark these election proceedings.

Phase One Voters' Lists

Unending public complaints were lodged with the Election Commission in all the states over manipulation of voters' lists. The bourgeois press, too, came out with documents showing how the voters' lists had been manipulated by the bourgeois parties and the so-called left parties like the CPI(M) having greater liaison with the administration. Never before have such large scale deletion and omission of genuine voters and inclusion of ghost voters been seen. "There have been instances where whole

blocks of voters have been struck off the lists".

(Statesman, 7.1.80)

In the whole country, the number of voters has gone up by 40.5 million since 1977, an increase of more than 12%. The highest increase has been in Tripura, about 22%.

In West Bengal the electorate increase under the scheme of 'Intensive Revision of Electoral Rolls' has been about 42 lakhs over the 1977 figures. But names of several lakhs of genuine voters have been deleted. Thus, the actual addition of new names comes to the staggering figure of about 70 lakhs. Scrutiny reveals that most of the new names belong to the false and ghost ranks. Names of those known to be workers of the opposition parties, or to have sympathy with

them, especially with our party, have been systematically struck off the lists. The revision of electoral rolls has resulted in many people who have voted since the first General Elections, being deprived of the right to exercise their franchise. Numerous discrepancies had been pointed out. In Baranagar (Calcutta North), for example, 309 names appear against one address—that of a CPI(M) MLA—where actually a few inmates live.

The fantastic increase in the number of voters outstrips the population growth rate according to official census. Birbhum (West Bengal), for example shows 20% rise in number of voters. Joining voice with the public, our party had drawn attention of the Election Commission to numerous instances of discrepancies and manipulations. Mr. Shakhder had admitted that he had received a 'disturbing' complaint "..... from individual voters and also from some candidates that the voters' lists were not properly prepared. Voters' names were either missing or were deleted in the marked copy at the polling booths". But he had hardly any mind at that time to look into these complaints. The Chief Electoral Officer of West Bengal simply dismissed the complaints as cases "related to clerical mistakes of enumerators".

At what stage were the names deleted? There are many instances that enumerators had collected names and issued receipts. But the names were not figuring on the draft rolls. Objections were filed in lakhs. But still then corrections were not made in the final rolls. What is more, many voters to whom party workers issued slips containing part numbers and serial numbers came to learn only at the polling booths that their names had been scored out on the lists lying with the Presiding Officers, i.e. marked copies of the electoral rolls.

Phase Two

Against this initial background let us recapitulate the people's experiences at the polling booths and outside on the two election days.

Booth Capture: There have been streams of public complaints of booth capture in many parts of the country. It became a widely talked about point and the daily papers too ventilated this aspect with photographic documents. Young boys much below the voting age stood in line to cast votes ousting genuine voters belonging to lower castes minorities and other sections of the common people. "A boy when questioned did not know his father's name as mentioned on the voter'

(Contd. from Page 4)
 halting stations and the boxes were transported to their destinations after midnight. For example, in Calcutta South, boxes had a halt at Tollygunj ITI before being taken to the destinations. Boxes from several booths under Bankura constituency had been taken to Charra air strip FCI godown before being moved to Purulia strong room. What was the halt necessary for? Inquiry has revealed that the public vehicles requisitioned for transport of the ballot boxes were in many areas driven not by the drivers of the vehicles, but by some other people. Who were these people entrusted to transport the vehicles via midway halts?

Boxes removed :

Besides, there were many other incidents. For example, the Presiding Officer of booth 142 in the Hariharpara Assembly segment (Murshidabad constituency) took the two used ballot boxes to the residence of Sher Ali, known to be a CPI (M) man. The SDO was informed and the police recovered the boxes following public demand.

Booth jamming : At booth nos. 76, 77 and 85 in the Domkal Assembly segment of the Murshidabad constituency a gang of CPI (M) supporters armed with lethal weapons forced the Presiding Officer to start voting 2½ hours before the scheduled time and they jammed the booth to cast votes.

Officials' conduct :

Another public complaint was that one or other of the polling officials at each booth had tried to influence and mislead the voters by pointing to the symbol of hammer-sickle-star on the pretext of demonstrating how to put the rubber stamp mark on the ballot paper.

At some booths under Bankura constituency ballot papers were issued previous to polling. At booth 83 of Assembly segment 241, the Presiding Officer a known CPI (M) supporter, had issued slips without numbers well in advance of the closing of polling.

Phase Three

The ballot boxes presented a scene of unusual features when brought to the counting tables.

Torn cloth cover, missing seals

In the first place many boxes had the cloth cover torn, Presiding Officers' and party agents' seals broken or missing and were without paper markings.

The boxes from Mayna North Changrachak Primary School (Tamluk constituency) did not contain the seal affixed by our party's agent.

Countless instances of glaring irregularities, discrepancies and anomalies have come from Calcutta South constituency. At Sonarpur 20 boxes were found to be without

signature of Presiding Officers and the government seal.

Boxes from booth 26 and 31 of Chowringhee were found to have paper seals exchanged. Boxes from booth 60 of Rashbehari of the same constituency bore paper seal number of booth 61 and there was no signature of the Presiding Officer. Signatures of the Presiding Officer of booth 61 on paper seal and Form 16 did not tally. Signatures of Presiding Officer on paper seals and ballot papers did not tally for booth 17 of Rashbehari. Boxes from booth 92 of Chowringhee were without cloth cover and seals of the candidates. Inner paper seals in boxes from booth 82 of Rashbehari were torn and there were no party or government seals. There was no signature of Presiding Officer on paper seal of boxes from booth 10. Similar instances were found in other constituencies too.

Open lids : Secondly, lids of ballot boxes were found to be open at many counting centres.

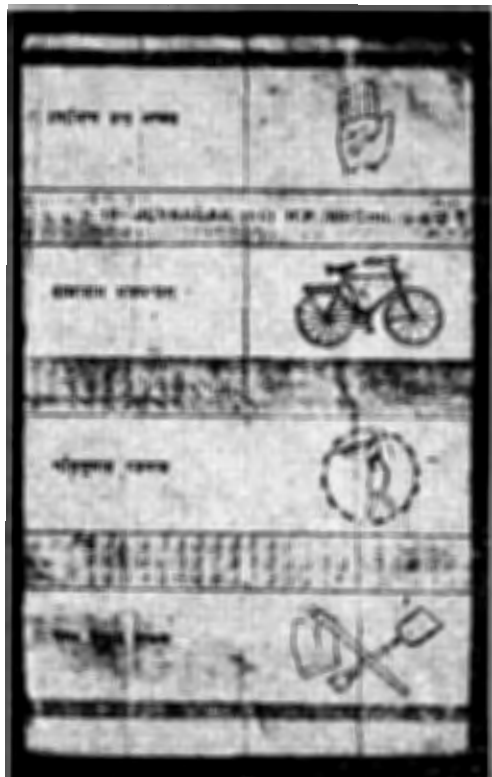
At Balluk New Primary School (booth 202/9, Tamluk segment of Tamluk constituency) one of our workers had tried to lift the ballot box by its handle when the lid came off. The Presiding Officer closed the lid again and voting continued. At Suloni high School booth (201/10 Panskura East Assembly segment of Tamluk, cons-

tituency) the box, after being cloth covered, was discovered to have its lid open. At Raghunathganj high School (Jangipur constituency) the ballot box was found to have its lid open when it was being cloth covered.

Excess or short ballot papers : Thirdly, ballot papers in excess or short of the numbers shown in Form 16 have been found in many constituencies. Countless concrete instances may be cited.

Excess ballot papers have been found in boxes of booth 125, 202/92, 203/35, 203/41, 207/55 and 207/85. The boxes from booth 16 of Tollygunj (Calcutta South) presented 696 ballot papers against 746 recorded by the Presiding Officer in Form 16. In booth 22 of Sonarpur, 83 ballot papers were found to be missing, whereas the same 83 bearing the signature of the Presiding Officer of booth 22 were discovered in a ballot box of booth 33. Similarly, ballot papers in excess or short were found in booth 10, 23, 33, 50, 63, 79, 85, 120 and 314 of Ballygunj and 15, 49, 55, 56, 70, 73, 76, 77, 85, 93, 108, 110 and 115 of Dhakuria. At Gosaba (Jaynagar constituency) booths 16, 17, 109 showed similar discrepancies. Moreover 700 ballot papers were found to bear no signature of the Presiding Officers. Discrepancies

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Front side of the stamped ballot of Joynagar Constituency bearing serial number 511963 found on the street.



Ballot papers stamped on Cycle Symbol, bearing serial number, booth number as also signatures of Presiding Officers found in the streets of Mathurapur and Joynagar Constituencies (obverse side)

Present political situation

(Contd. from page 3)

legislatures is 'loss of people's mandate' in the Lok Sabha election by the non-Congress (I) ruling parties. Can it not be argued then that by the same token the legislatures of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Karnataka should have been dissolved? But it was not done so. Because, the non-Congress (I) ministries in these three states were already replaced by Congress (I) ministries through defection. Therefore, it is not difficult to see that Indira Gandhi and her party in quest of absolute dictatorial power, want to grab as many state governments as they deem necessary for the present. They are doing it through defection where they can, through dismissal and dissolution should necessity demand so, or through more other means depending upon the concrete case. The reasons they adduce in justification are mere alibis. And, as is said, the villain never wants in alibis. What is more, in the present case, none of their arguments bear scrutiny. To claim, then, sanction of democratic norms for these patently authoritarian measures is nothing but villainy.

Whatever reasons Indira Gandhi may produce in justification of reintroducing the PD Act, it leaves no room for doubt that the real motive of her government behind this measure is to arm itself with arbitrary powers in order to strike down on any legitimate democratic mass movements with the coercive instrument of the capitalist state machine. And here, too, it was the erstwhile Janata Government and its allies who had kept road open for reintroduction of the PD Act. The provision for it was retained by the Janata Government through the 44th constitution amendment. The Janata had not even hid its intention of applying the preventive detention measure against trade union and demo-

cratic mass movements. But the CPI(M), except for voicing a formal protest during parliamentary debate, had made no effort to build up mass movement against the retention of this most undemocratic provision in the constitution. It should also be recalled that even though the caretaker government of the Lok Dal-Congress (U) combine had introduced the measures for preventive detention through an ordinance, the CPI(M) leadership had called upon the people "to choose the formation headed by the Janata (S) and the Congress which has taken an anti-authoritarian and anti-communal stand. It would, therefore, be in the interests of the left movements, the organised movements of the working people, to help this political formation win in the electoral contest and form a government. Such an outcome of the election will be a heavy blow struck simultaneously against authoritarianism and communalism." (People's Democracy 26.9.79). How heavy the blow has been anybody can see for himself!

Today, the Janata, Lok Dal, CPI(M), CPI etc. are vocal in condemning these measures of the Congress (I) Government as undemocratic. The Congress (I), at that time, had condemned identical measures of the Janata, Lok Dal, etc. in similar language. Evidently, what charges, and when, these parliamentary parties will level against each other depend upon which position they are speaking from—whether from government or opposition. Otherwise the substance remains the same. A sort of 'positional contradiction', so to say!

The parliamentary parties are locked today in a shameless competition to justify their misdeeds by quoting each other's precedent. Hardly do they care for any scruple, conscience, morals and ethics. Drawing attention to this outrage on the

public standard by the conduct of the bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, our beloved leader, teacher and guide and a great Marxist thinker, had observed that the justification offered by these parties for their misdeeds sounded like a robber pleading his case. 'That fellow has committed theft, that is why I did robbery'. Now, if some one had committed theft, would that entitle others to commit robbery? What right others would have then to condemn the thief? It will then amount to competing for becoming as big thieves or robbers as each can. Otherwise, if someone committed a theft or robbery, the point was to prevent him from doing that. This kind of rationalisation of unethical conduct is gaining ground today. And a conspiracy is afoot to build all-out fascism in the country along this course behind the public view.

Incidentally, people now witness the strange phenomenon of change of judicial view in the country along with change of government. Special courts were set up several months back by the Janata Government to try cases involving Indira Gandhi and some of her associates. Courts then held this step, perfectly in order. After Indira Gandhi's return to power, these courts have declared themselves illegal, unconstitutional and void 'beyond controversy'. With the new government in office, new commissions are being instituted to look into the malpractices of who have been overthrown from government. A question therefore, intrigues the people's mind: Whose face does justice then look in? The power that be? This has become the moral-ethical standard of the bourgeois institutions.

Significantly, the CPI(M), CPI, etc. although they now protest against Indira Gandhi's measures of dismissal of non-Congress (I) state governments and reintroduction of the PD Act, have found

nothing wrong with her government's resolve to 'revitalize' the '20-point programme' which she had introduced during the emergency rule. At that time, these parties had all hailed this programme as one which would "go a long way in giving relief to the people" and even open up "the vistas of mass radicalization". As pointed out by our Central Committee at that time, this much flaunted '20 point programme' was no more than a so-called radical cloak to cover the dark design of the emergency rule. To drive the steamroller of the rule, Indira Gandhi had wielded instruments of oppression in one hand and the 20-point programme in the other as a fake promise to ameliorate their sufferings and yet subjugate them. What kind of method was this?

And what is her present method? Essentially the same. Only the tactics have changed for a more careful and cunning style as learnt from the lessons of her recent experiences. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, our beloved leader, teacher and guide, had warned time and again that this was the typically fascist method: "Fascism always and everywhere adopts a dual policy of suppression and persuasion. In the beginning, in its attempt to entrench in the national life firmly—its aim is not so much to ruthlessly suppress the mass force as to win it over to its side as volunteers, willing to carry out fascist plans and programmes for national reconstruction. Without a co-operating mass force at its back, fascism can hardly hold its sway".

The ruling bourgeoisie is shifting the entire burden of its acute crisis on to the people. It is the people who have to bear the burden due to the crisis of the bourgeois system and the power lust of the bourgeois parties and leaders. It is they who have had to bear the entire burden of the recent mid-term Lok Sabha Election. And now the burden of Assembly

elections in nine states, due to quest of Mrs. Indira Gandhi and her party for absolute power, has been thrust upon them. Countless problems in every sphere are paralysing the people's life. There is want of essential commodities. There is an alarming price rise, a disastrous power crisis and crippling unemployment. There is retrenchment, lay-off and lock-out in every part of the country. A restlessness has gripped the entire life. Problems are only multiplying, there is no abatement anywhere.

Our party has been warning all along that the basic problems in people's life cannot be solved through mere change of government, whichever way it is brought about. So long the root cause of all these problems, that is capitalism, is there—more so in its third phase of intense general crisis—problems will be only multiplying. There can be no solution to them until and unless capitalism is overthrown by anti-capitalist socialist revolution. Whoever goes to defend this crisis-ridden, moribund capitalism is bound to adopt authoritarian measures, this way or that way to suppress the people's movements against capitalist exploitation and oppression. Indira Gandhi has been returned to power as the trusted servitor of the ruling bourgeoisie to safeguard its interest in its present hour of crisis. So, she is taking all these measures. In fact any other party, called upon to serve in this role, would have to take one or another form of authoritarian measures. Did not the Janata Government reveal an authoritarian character? Did not it introduce mini-MISA and massacred the legitimate mass movements at Kanpur, Bailadilla and so many other places? Are not the CPI(M)-led 'Left Front' Governments conducting themselves more or less in the same way? Have not they struck down on the legitimate democratic mass movements.

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with the coercive arm of the state, killing the refugees of Marichjhanpi, and workers of Calcutta Port, brutally attacking the mass violators of law led by our party on the 15th June and 31st August last year in West Bengal and on so many other occasions? But Indira Gandhi, with her present objective and the unmistakable symptoms of fascist design in her recent chain of measures, poses a greater threat to legitimate democratic mass movements.

In the background of this deepening crisis and grave danger to the country, the roles of the CPI(M), CPI, etc.—parties claiming to be Marxist, to be leaders of the toiling masses, to have popularity with the masses—should be examined. These parties have raised hue and cry that authoritarianism has reemerged with the return of Indira Gandhi and her associates. This raises the question, in the first place: What had been their own roles when Indira Gandhi was trying to stage a political comeback? Did they try to organize mass movements against the political character of Indira Gandhi's crimes? Did they try to unite the genuine left and democratic forces, in order to resist her comeback? Did not they join hands with Indira Gandhi and the band of defectors led by Charan Singh to bring down the Janata Government at the centre? Did not they earlier objectively support to sustain the misrule of the Janata? Have not they themselves taken anti-people, anti-democratic measures in states where they are in governmental power? Did not Indira Gandhi take advantage of all these to retrieve her position of power?

In the second place, if these parties do intend to fight authoritarianism seriously, can they do so by joining hands with the bourgeois parties? A particular bourgeois party can oppose, from its parliamentary interest, a particular form of authoritarianism represented by

another bourgeois party in a given context. But can any bourgeois party root out authoritarianism as a phenomenon? The CPI(M), CPI etc., although they claim themselves to be Marxists, are not judging the phenomenon of authoritarianism, or fascism, or, for that matter, the political situations of the country from the basic class angularity of the proletariat. For this reason, they fail to see, or do not see, the class base of authoritarianism, or fascism. They fail to see, or do not see, that authoritarianism, or fascism, is not the heinous character of a particular bourgeois party. It is a bourgeois class character, historically acquired by the class in the era of moribund capitalism. Exposing the character of fascism by his brilliant analysis, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had pointed out: 'Fascism is economic centralisation, maximum concentration of political power in the state, rigid firmness in administration, cultural regimentation, all leading to more and more identification of the state with the interest of monopolists in defence of the aggregate interest of the capitalist class'.

Again and again, the CPI(M), CPI etc. are seeking alliance with the bourgeois parties like the Janata, Lok Dal, Congress(U), when the task is to build genuine left and democratic unity—for which our party has been giving call and these parties have been refusing all along.

These parties are now caught in the cross currents of the fast changing political scene. They are running about to and fro like shuttle cocks flying from court to court. At one stage the CPI(M) and its allies withdrew support from the Janata calling it communal and a greater danger to the people. Now they are seeking alliance with the same Janata calling authoritarianism as the greater danger. In between, they had supported the Lok Dal-Congress (U) calling

communalism and authoritarianism equal danger, which combine, however, is free from neither communalism nor authoritarianism.

In the midst of the parliamentary fights of the bourgeois parties to grab governmental power, the CPI(M), CPI etc. are aligning themselves with one or other of the bourgeois contenders so as to gain more seats in the parliament and assemblies, more ministries, or more years for their ministries. It is precisely from this parliamentary objective that they are choosing their allies, calling one 'progressive' and another 'reactionary', and appending these labels as does suit their exigency. Dictated by this politics of exigency they always find it convenient to distinguish 'progressive' section from a 'reactionary' section in each of the bourgeois parties, and 'progressive measures' from 'reactionary measures' of each bourgeois government. This has been their practice all along and they are about to do the same in the present changed circumstance.

Because of their basically wrong approach, the analysis of these parties of the concrete political situations are proving to be wrong every time. And in every case their political moves are objectively helping the anti-people forces of different colours and shades to consolidate their positions. Even as, they acknowledge their mistakes these parties again tread the same wrong base political line; they are unable to determine the character of their mistakes. Their moves keep their rank and file in a state of utter confusion and the people are the worst sufferers.

On the Afghanistan issue these parties have not much difference of view with Indira Gandhi. Their leaders have already started saying, as reported in the press, that Indira Gandhi had taken an anti-imperialist progressive stand on this issue. Again with all their anti-authoritarian

Present political situation

itarian slogans against Indira Gandhi during the election campaign, the CPI(M) leadership now assures that they want co-operation, not confrontation with her. They are soliciting from Indira Gandhi similar help or co-operation on the plea of federal structure. Do they, by all this, mean to fight authoritarianism?

The pertinent question is however, can the CPI(M) and CPI who are today finding 'progressive' aspects in Indira Gandhi's foreign policy and are assuring her co-operation from state governments develop a real struggle against her authoritarian moves? They can aspire to emerge as the third alternative within the bourgeois framework of two party parliamentary system by this sort of manoeuvrings. But by that they are only helping the bourgeoisie to consolidate fascism behind the facade of a two party parliamentary system. They talk of handling the contradiction among the bourgeois parties, but by their politics they are simply offering themselves to be handled by the bourgeoisie—and consciously at that. Is it not to win the credibility of the ruling class and to prove their mettle as dependable servitor of the class in its present grave crisis?

The SUCI calls upon the workers, supporters and sympathisers of the CPI(M), CPI, etc who cherish the people's hardearned democratic rights and want to fight against this growing fascist menace to correctly assess their respective party lines and realize to which direction their leaderships are leading them along. They must remember that although social democratism paves the way for fascism, the fascists do not spare even the social democrats. This is the lesson of history.

We appeal to the people to judge all these questions critically. They must see the roots of the danger before them, they must see the direction it is coming from. They must

realize that the menace of fascism can be fought only by building united mass struggle against it. The task is, no doubt, very difficult for them today. People must close their ranks and rally round the party which alone is holding aloft the banner of genuine left and democratic unity, which alone is trying to organise countrywide legitimate democratic mass movements. It is our party, the SUCI. The SUCI calls upon them to rise to the occasion. They must realise that it is SUCI and SUCI alone built up and reared by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh that has correctly laid bare the economic, political and cultural aspects of fascism. Correctly grasping Marxism-Leninism as concretised by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh it was again the leadership of SUCI that warned the Indian people before '77 election that the Indian bourgeoisie was going to initiate two party parliamentary system in this country which also was a variant of fascism. Before this election of 1980 too SUCI alarmed the people that Indian bourgeoisie, enmeshed in crises was going to shift the entire burden on to the shoulder of the people. It was the common experience of the people that when there was none to build up mass movement it was only the SUCI which came forward to undertake the responsibility of building mass movement in discharge of its historic role. People found only in SUCI a kind of politics which was always blended with the tune of proletarian culture on the edifice of which it bases its politics and which always seriously means to uphold ethics and morality in politics when others have plunged themselves in deep sea of vulgar bourgeois immorality. We therefore, appeal to the people to rally behind SUCI that alone is carrying the banner of struggle and revolutionary objective in order to hasten the day of their emancipation from capitalist bondage.

'Free' and 'Fair' Election !

(Contd. from page 5) in the number of ballot papers and presence of unsigned but stamped ballot papers have been found also in Jangipur and Krishnagar. About 100 ballot papers showed colour of stamp mark different from those on the rest. Ballot papers in bunches within sealed boxes were also common in many booths. Complaints were duly lodged with the election authority in every case by our party's Counting Agents but strangely these were all overruled and counting allowed.

Ballot papers outside boxes: Fourthly, large number of stamped ballot papers, often in bunches were found scattered at many places in the different constitu-

number of ballot papers stamped on cycle symbol have been found at Charulata in Kashipur.

Travelling ballot papers: Stranger still is the fact of travel of ballot papers from one constituency to another constituency. A ballot paper bearing no. 452001 of Calcutta North East constituency came out of a ballot box of booth 64 of Calcutta South constituency. Instances of still wider travel can be cited. Two stamped ballot papers (nos. 266858 and 266935) of Nabadwip Assembly segment have travelled into a ballot box of booth 72/15 of Kaliganj Assembly segment of Krishnagar constituency.

One ballot paper (no. 561628) of Jangipur constituency was located

date for the Jamshedpur seat, had gone in procession with many of our party workers to cast vote. But strangely the ballot boxes of the booth where they had cast vote did not register a single vote for our party!

Several voters of booth 9, 30, 33, 43 of Jangipur constituency have declared in writing along with their signatures and thumb impressions that they voted by stamping on cycle symbol (symbol of our party's candidate) but the same ballot papers were missing in the boxes during counting. For example, Ajemul Shekh (Part no. 49, Sl. no. 433) and 51 others of booth 33 have declared that they voted for the cycle symbol. But the box turned out a figure of 30.

Duplicate ballot papers: Besides, there are a large number of other instances of irregularities, discrepancies and anomalies which are intriguing the public mind. At Raghunathpur Assembly segment (booth 241/67) of Bankura constituency a counter foil (no. 215496) was found in a ballot box, but not the ballot paper. The existence of duplicate ballot papers has been officially admitted by the Returning Officer of Jangipur constituency. In an official memo no. 98 (8)—EL, dated, Berhampur, dt. 4.1.80, the officer has admitted ballot papers numbering 1001 (Sl. nos. 154001 to 155000 and 281951) had duplicates. Moreover, 2031 ballot papers (Sl. no. 151001 to 152000 and 31 others) were missing.

These apart, countless instances of irregularities committed by the ruling parties have been reported. Large number of people were transported by government hired vehicles from one district to another on instruction of government as a measure to ensure votes for the ruling parties.

Invisible Thread

In the face of all these concrete instances, a serious question has arisen in the people's mind.

West Bengal Assembly on Assam

Calcutta, 29th Feb '80:

On the 28th February '80, the West Bengal Legislative Assembly discussed the present situation in Assam and adopted a motion jointly moved by five members belonging to different parties of the 'Left Front'.

It expressed deep concern at the present situation in Assam and Meghalaya and regretted that the move to exclude the names of 'foreign nationals' from the voters list has now turned into persecution and expulsion of non-Assamese Indians from the state. The resolution demanded, among others, solution of the urgent problems of poverty, land, unemployment, and other social and economic maladies afflicting the life of the people of the state. It condemned the role played by the divisive forces, called upon the democratic people of different states to forge unity and cohesion among them and urged the central government to take necessary

steps to meet the situation.

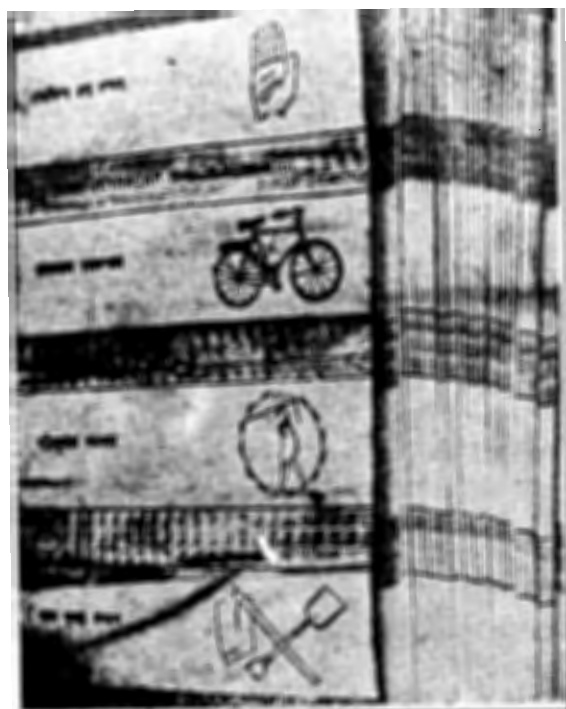
Comrade Debaprasad Sarkar, SUCI leader in the House while supporting the main contention of the resolution said that the question of due recognition, protection, growth and development of language, education and culture of the people of Assam was very important and moved the amendment to that effect for its incorporation in the main body of the resolution. He pointed out that it was very urgent even to dispel any possible misgivings from the mind of the people of Assam and to guard against any attempt of the separatist forces to make it a plea. He expressed his firm conviction that the people of West Bengal would always stand by the side of the people of Assam in their fight against any attack on the right to protect their language, education and culture.

It is unfortunate that the amendment had to be put to vote, and was lost.

SUCI Deputation

(Contd. from page 1) for necessary amendment of the constitution. Expressing grave concern at the pathetic failure of the administration to meet the situation the government was urged by the deputationists to ensure safety of the people belonging to other nationalities, after a rational approach evolves

with regard to the question of Base-Year, stop harassment on them and take stringent and stern measures to deal with the miscreants, the forces of communalism, who were responsible for the present communal frenzy in the state that has struck at the very root of unity of the people.



Bunch of Ballots stamped on Cycle Symbol found on a street in Joynagar Constituency

encies. One ballot paper stamped on cycle symbol (our party's candidate), with no. 336435 from booth 16 of Mithurapur constituency has been picked up from the road. Ballot paper no. 295396 of booth 129/58 and no. 245003 of 122/135 of same constituency, and no. 511963 of 14/105 of Joynagar constituency were similarly found to be lying on the ground. About 2000 ballot papers half burnt, have been found near a pond at Hura (Bankura constituency). Another 2000 have been found at Bishpuria of the same constituency. A

in a ballot box of booth 75/45 of Krishnagar constituency. A number of ballot papers of booth 29 of Suti Assembly segment of Jangipur constituency were found in a box of booth 30 of the same segment.

Fantastic discrepancies: When counting of votes at seats contested by our party yielded such fantastically poor figures as 0.1 or 2 in areas known to be our party's organised belts, people themselves came out in protest. Comrade Prithish Chanda, member, Central Committee of our party, and a candi-

These apparently disconnected facts seem to be linked by an invisible thread. Intensive changes in voters' lists, irregularities at booths on the polling day, easily removable lids of ballot boxes, midway halt of boxes during transport, cloth covers and government and party seals missing, unsigned ballot papers, travel of stamped ballot papers from one constituency to another, ballot papers missing in one box and discovered in another box in another constituency, finding of stamped ballot papers at unusual places, etc. have a direction. It is also gathered that 30% extra ballot papers have been officially printed for each constituency whereas election rules lay down that only 10% extra ballots are to be printed. They suggest a silent and secret operation. What is that? A planned rigging including tampering of ballot boxes?

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